

The Anniversary by **PoisonInTheWine**

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Summary: Takes place after Stranger Things 2; Five months had passed since Eleven's return. It's the day of their anniversary, and Mike wants to surprise El with something special. (OneShot)

The Anniversary

10/31/17

Happy Halloween everyone, just a tiny thought that popped into my head as I sat binge-watching Halloween movies while periodically being interrupted by enthusiastic trick-or-treaters. Enjoy 😊

Hawkins, 1985

Five months had passed since El's return, and it seemed that everything was quite right in the small town of Hawkins. It had been a quiet time of peace for everyone, as if nothing bad had ever really happened in the first place. After the closing of the gate, life slowly crept into a routine of normalcy for Mike and his friends. El lived with Hop, homeschooled. Mike knew that it was best for her-for now-and he secretly hoped that next year she could attend public school, but that wasn't what troubled his mind in this moment.

It was their anniversary- of El's return, and of their newfound relationship. Five incredible months had passed since the kiss at the Snow Ball, and yet Mike still felt as nervous as the day he realized that he had feelings for El. *It shouldn't be a big deal*, he thought to himself, *don't overdo it*.

But he was so wrong, it *was* a big deal. Every moment he spent with El was a big deal. In these five months, they discovered the world together. It was December that El first played in the snow, with Mike watching her with a dreamy look in his eyes as the snowflakes piled in her brown locks- cheeks reddened by the cold. She caught him looking at her, and playfully flung a snowball at his face. Thus, a snowball fight began and lasted for hours until the pair collapsed breathlessly into the snow.

In January they celebrated the new year together at Will's house. He remembered the clock striking midnight, and the celebratory cheers of his friends around him at the beginning of a new year. He watched his sister and Jonathon share a kiss, and naturally he did the same to El. A quick yet loving kiss that reddened their cheeks and made those strange butterfly feelings patter in their stomachs.

When Valentine's Day came around, Mike had to explain why couples bought cheap chocolate boxes and flowers for each other to El- who had taken a keen interest in the idea of it all. So, Mike ran out that evening and bought her a cream-colored bear with a tiny box of caramel chocolates. She had been delighted.

Every day was a new discovery to El, whether it was a new hiding place she and him had discovered or a species of insect. She was so easily pleased by whatever Mike did for her, so why couldn't he think of a gift that he could give to her today? The most special day out of all days.

He could take her to their treehouse in the woods by the now abandoned Hawkins Laboratory, and they would spread out their favorite wool blanket and eat Eggo waffles until the sun set and Eleven's eyes matched the color of the stars. But they always did that.

He wanted to be romantic, but he didn't quite know how. After a few more long moments of pacing and thinking, Mike decided to ring the person who could possibly know the answer to his conflict- Steve.

After a few rings, Steve groggily picked up the phone.

"Hello?" he asked.

"Steve? It's Mike. I need your help with something." Mike replied, anxiously twirling the cord of the phone in his fingers.

"It's a bit early for that Wheeler." Steve muttered.

Mike glanced at the clock on the wall and frowned, "It's 1 o'clock Steve."

He heard Steve scowl into the phone, "Whatever, what do you want?"

"How can I be romantic? It's El and I's anniversary. I wanted to do something special."

Steve let out a quiet laugh, Mike imagined he was shaking his head at this moment. "So you called me?"

Mike rolled his eyes, "Who else would I call? Dustin?" he replied

sarcastically.

"You have a point there."

Mike sighed impatiently, "Come on Steve, I don't have that much time."

"Alright, alright. I would get her something unique, or take her somewhere you haven't been before. Surprise her or something, chicks love that. Oh, and flowers."

Mike thought for a moment, they had been to most of the places in Hawkins already. There wasn't one place that he and El hadn't explored, unless...

"Steve? You're the best." Mike said hurriedly, hanging up before Steve could even reply.

There was a lake a few miles from the house that he hadn't visited since he was six. Ever since Mike had shown her a picture of the beach, she never stopped talking about how much she wanted to go. It was not the beach, but it was close enough for the time being. *One day*, he vowed, *we'll see the beach*.

He grabbed a basket and threw in her favorite snacks. The waffles were the first to be packed, followed by candies and other sweets she adored. He then packed their favorite blanket, and some flashlights. He had everything but a gift.

What could surprise her? He had already gotten her flowers, bears, candies and other things. He needed something original, something that would make her happy. A small smile crept onto his lips when he thought of the perfect thing....

xXx

"How far is it, Mike?" El asked tentatively, a blindfold covering her eyes as Mike lead her through the bushes.

He gave her hand a small, yet reassuring squeeze. "Not far. Almost there." he promised.

El smiled to herself, wondering what on earth Mike could be doing now. She felt him stop, and carefully untie the blindfold that obscured her vision. When she could see her surroundings again, she smiled gleefully at Mike.

The lake was a small, yet pretty one. The sun had already begun to set, its orange and pink hues softly reflecting off of the water's surface. The willow trees that surrounded the perimeter of the lake swayed delicately in the breeze. It was a beautiful scene, another one of their hidden treasures.

"Do you like it?" Mike asked her. She nodded enthusiastically. Of course she liked it, everything was so beautiful.

She kissed him lightly on the cheek, "Thank you." she said sweetly.

Mike's ears turned the slightest of pink, "Don't thank me yet, come over here." He grabbed her hand again and led her under the giant willow tree where their blanket and basket sat. She smiled and fell onto the blanket, pulling Mike down with her. They both collapsed in a heaping pile of limbs, giggling.

Mike untangled himself and sat up, unfolding the contents of the basket before El. She wasted no time in devouring the treats that Mike had brought, grinning at him occasionally in gratitude. Together, they ate and enjoyed the company of each other.

After she had finished her last waffle, she looked at Mike curiously. "What's this all about?"

Mike smiled a bit, "Five months ago, you came back. I figured we would celebrate. Like an anniversary."

"Anniversary." El repeated, mentally noting the new word.

Mike nodded, and began to pull a square object from the basket. "I also figured that I should get you a gift, because that's what people do on their anniversary. I wasn't sure what to actually get you, so I decided on making it instead."

Mike handed her a little brown leather book. She gingerly took the book and traced the front cover's font with her index finger, *M & L's*

Adventures. She opened the book and let out a tiny gasp. On every page there was a memory- their memories- along with a small doodle to depict the event. The first page began with the Snow Ball, and Mike's sloppy handwriting reading "*The first time in a long time where I felt happy, because you were there.*" As she flipped through the pages, her smile grew wider and wider at the fond memories that they had shared over the months.

El finally looked up at Mike, her lip slightly quivering. Oh, how she adored him. Her *bestfriend*, her *boyfriend*. The word felt so foreign yet so comforting.

"Thank you." she whispered, carefully placing the book down to wrap herself in Mike's arms. He hugged her back and planted a little kiss on her head. El let her face rest in his chest. She had never felt more at home than she did here, in Hawkins, with Mike. It was the grandest feeling, to feel love.

After what seemed like infinity, she looked up. "Mike?" she quietly asked, careful not to spoil the moment.

"Yeah?"

"Can we have more anniversaries?"

Mike laughed, and so did she.

Yes, she heard him say, many more.